



HOWARD COUNTY TOURISM NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rachelina Bonacci, Executive Director, Howard County Tourism, Inc.
410-313-1439 or Rachelina@VisitHowardCounty.com

“Petal Peeping” Promotion Springs into Howard County

Howard County Tourism & Promotion welcomes Spring with over a dozen activities filled with flower power and outdoor fun!

(Ellicott City, MD) March 2009 – Howard County Tourism & Promotion introduces its new “Petal Peeping” promotion and invites you to enjoy the many gardens, wildflowers and outdoor eco-friendly events this Spring throughout Howard County. “Leaf Peeping” every fall for foliage is popular, so why not “Petal Peeping” to encourage travel and tourism in the Spring? Howard County, a model green community, is home to Maryland first and largest state park, thousands of acres of parkland and 1,300 pink Blossoms of Hope Kwanzan cherry trees is the perfect place to welcome spring. Here are the 15 places that top Tourism’s Spring “Petal Peeping” list:

Blossoms of Hope: The Howard County Cherry Tree Project planting locations & April CHERRYBRATION DAYS highlights

Catch a spectacular display of pink each spring in April, when over 1,300 Kwanzan cherry trees blossom through out Howard County. Take a camera and picnic basket and visit any of eighteen different groves of Blossoms of Hope cherry trees. Groves range in size from five to 26 trees and are located at county libraries, local parks and historic attractions. Enjoy the trees while driving too, over 300 Blossoms of Hope Trees are planted along State and County roadways. April CHERRYBRATION Days are a month of activities like Pink Plates specials at 15 community conscious restaurants, Pink Panes window décor in Historic Ellicott City, Pink Greens golf outing at Turf Valley Resort amongst 50 cherry trees and Blossom Bike About in Columbia. Visit www.blossomsofhope.com to learn more.

Daffodil Day at Whipps Memorial Gardens

One of Ellicott Mills’ earliest cemeteries (1855) is livelier than you think, especially in Springs with thousands of daffodils! This one-acre site in Ellicott City, originally a family burial ground, has been restored and abounds with fascinating local history and many heritage and native plants of the area. Also call “The Angel Garden,” master gardeners have restored and created a variety of beautiful settings interspersed with pathways and benches. April 4, 2009 is Daffodil Day, free admission, refreshments, tour of the cemetery-park, raffle of garden basket and talks on history and horticulture. 1 to 4pm at Whipps Garden Cemetery Park, 410-465-6721. St. John's Lane, 2 blocks south of Frederick Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Open daily dawn to dusk.

Brighton Dam’s 22,000 Azalea Garden

Brighton Dam Azalea Garden located just a few hundred yards across the Patuxent River is a

an azalea lovers delight. The garden is easily accessed from the Triadelphia Reservoir west of Clarksville and greets visitors each spring with 22,000 azalea blooms. For more information, call 301-774-9124 or visit www.wssc.dst.md.us.

Historic Savage Mill's GreenLife Festival

The first annual GreenLife Festival will gather together artists and businesses on the forefront of the Green Movement for a two day community festival that benefits The Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Come out to Savage Mill, May 2nd and 3rd for a celebration of all things green, featuring food, beer tastings, live music, zip line, free massages, green exhibitors, offers and demonstrations from Mill merchants, the GreenScape Art Exhibit, and a visit from MIX 107.3 FM's Chilli Amar. Historic Savage Mill, 8600 Foundry Street, Savage, MD, 410-792-2820, 800-788-MILL, www.savagemill.com

Shrine of St Anthony's grotto, perennial & herb gardens

Situated on 310 acres of rolling hills and woodland, the St. Joseph Cupertino Friary, is the home of the Shrine of St. Anthony. Inspired by the great "Sacro Convento" of Assisi, Italy, the Shrine incorporates stunning medieval elements and embodies a late Renaissance style of architecture. The perennial garden includes a replica grotto of Lourdes and the friars maintain a nearby herb garden. 12290 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042, 410-531-2800.

Tai Sophia herb garden, the "Green Farmacy Garden"

A place of quiet and communion with the plants, Tai Sophia Institute's herb garden is a haven for students of the Institute. The herb garden offers both a casual teaching space for classes as well as living examples of many of the herbal medicines used in the clinic. Affectionately referred to as the "Green Farmacy" Garden is located behind the Institute, at the edge of neighboring woodlands that hosts native medicinal plants. Tai Sophia Institute, 7750 Montpelier Road, Laurel, Maryland 20723, 800-735-2968, www.tai.edu

"Wildflowers are Wonderful" Wonder Walk at Howard County Conservancy

Just 20 minutes from Columbia with beautiful vistas of the Patapsco Valley is the "green" Gudelsky Environmental Education Center at the Howard County Conservancy, on-site at Mt. Pleasant a 300-year-old farm. The center offers programs on local animal and plant life found in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. With a variety of habitats and micro-climates, the Conservancy's 232 acres of rolling hills are perfectly suited for nature study like Wildflowers are Wonderful Wonder Walk lead by Bob & Jo Solem of the Howard County Bird Club on April 11 at 10AM. Mt. Pleasant Farm, P.O. Box 175, Woodstock; 410-465-8877, www.hcconservancy.org for more information

Patapsco Valley State Park NEW Nature Center to Open on Earth Day

Children playing at the tire playground located at Patapsco Valley State Park's Hilton area will soon have a new place to explore and learn, a New Nature Center from the area's old camp store. Its exterior has silhouette paintings of animals found in the Patapsco area. Rain gardens line the walkway to the center, which passes the reading circle made by log stumps. In keeping with a 'green' theme, the center is equipped with a rain barrel outside and most of the displays inside have been made using recycled materials that were generously donated to the park. Inside the Center, visitors can learn about Patapsco's geography. Displays focus on the flora and fauna in the area, the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and geology features of the area. <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/patapscovalley.html>

Belmont's "Low Maintenance Landscaping with Perennials" Workshop

Wow your neighbors with a beautifully landscaped yard that requires little work or maintenance. Professional horticulturalist Miriam Mahowald shows you how to create a

garden and keep plants healthy. View the beautiful perennial gardens at historic Belmont amongst its 80 rolling acres, woodlands and pond. \$ Sunday, April 26, 2009, 1—4PM, www.howardcc.edu, registration through Howard Community College required.

Nature Photography Workshop & Hike

Learn how to shoot great nature photos in this practical 3-part workshop. First session (Thurs, June 4 from 7-9:30pm) teaches what types of equipment (lenses, filters, and accessories) are important and guidelines for composition. Next session (Sat, June 6 from 1-4:30pm), head to a local park to put what you've learned into action. The third session (Thurs, June 11 from 7-9:30pm) features constructive feedback on your images during a group photo critique. Appropriate for both digital and film shooters with any type of camera (point-and shoot or SLR). Field trip includes hiking 2 to 3 miles on well-used but rugged trails (expect to climb a few hills and walk on rocks in a few spots) with your camera gear. Provide own transportation. Equipment list and directions to field trip location will be provided at first class. 18 yrs + / June 4-11 / 3 sessions / \$95, Ellicott Mills Middle School 7-9:30pm Th, Sa, www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP

Howard County's GREENFEST 2009

This free, family-friendly event will focus on alternative energy, energy efficiency, water conservation, and water reuse. As is our tradition, other "green" themes will also be featured, such as green buildings, green consumer products, green landscaping, wildlife and environmental education, and children's activities. Saturday, April 4th, 2009, 10:00am - 4:00pm, Howard Community College Burrill Galleria, www.Howardcountymd.gov, 410-313-3000

Howard County Library's "Birds in the Garden"

Master Gardener Stephanie Medcroft explains how to identify birds and attract them to your garden. See and touch nests and eggs, listen to bird songs, then create a peanut butter bird feeder. Ages 5-10; 60 minutes. Registration is required. www.hclibrary.org or by calling 410.880.5978. Savage Branch, 9525 Durness Ln, Laurel, MD 20723

Bon Secours Spiritual Center Peace Garden

Centennial Peace Garden provides a safe and easily accessible sacred space open to all. Guests enjoy walking trails that wind throughout the 313 acre property or finding a quiet spot to relax and enjoy the beauty of the landscape. The pond, with its small island waterfalls, Japanese garden and footbridge is a center for contemplation and one of the most photographed spots on the campus. Bon Secours Spiritual Center, 1525 Marriottsville Road, Marriottsville, MD 21104, bssc@bshsi.org, (410)442-3141

Historic Ellicott City walking tour

Historic Ellicott City has become a 'media darling' often featured as a wonderful weekend getaway for its boutiques and bistros. Nestled in the scenic hills above the Patapsco river, surrounded by charming steeples, fabulous Colonial, Federal, Victorian and even Art Deco architecture, Ellicott City tempts visitors to escape to centuries ago and peep into the public and private gardens. 8267 Main Street, Side Entrance, Ellicott City, MD 21043, 410-313-1900 www.VisitHowardCounty.com

TOURISM...Having FUN is Serious Business!

Howard County Tourism, Inc., a non-profit, membership-based organization is recognized and funded in part by Howard County Government and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development as the official Destination Marketing Organization for Howard County,

Maryland. Howard County Tourism's mission is to increase, develop and promote tourism in Howard County by featuring the county's unique sites, services, products and people like creating the *Petal Peeping Promotion*. For more information contact Howard County Tourism or check out our website www.VisitHowardCounty.com.

Below are the most recent and available statistics (2006) from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development for HOWARD COUNTY'S dynamic Tourism Industry:

- Tourism generated \$528.72 million in expenditures from domestic visitors
- The tourism industry generated 8,000 jobs
- Tourism generated \$16.1 million in County tax receipts

#